AMENDMENTS TO CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) An interactive educational toy apparatus comprising:

(a) an indicium containing structure including an indicium and a first attachment element; and

(b) a base unit capable of being attached to a vertical surface, wherein the base unit includes

(i) a housing,

(ii) a receiving region adapted to receive the indicium containing structure,

(iii) a processor unit in the housing,

(iv) a speaker coupled to the processor unit,

(v) a reader coupled to the processor unit, and

(vi) a second attachment element coupled to the housing,

wherein the indicium containing structure is capable of being attached to the base unit using the first attachment element and the base unit is capable of being attached to the vertical surface using the second attachment element and wherein the reader is capable of identifying the indicium containing structure in response to the receiving region having received the indicium containing structure.

2. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the first attachment element comprises a first magnet, and wherein the second attachment element comprises a second magnet.

3. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the indicium is three-dimensional.

4. (Original) The apparatus of claim 3 wherein the indicium is a letter, a number, a symbol, or a portion of an animal.

5. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 4 further comprising a plurality of the indicium containing structures, wherein the plurality of indicium containing structures represent the alphabet.

6. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the indicium containing structure comprises a part of an animal.

7. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the base unit includes a window that is cooperatively structured to receive a back structure of the indicium containing structure.

8. (Original) The apparatus of claim 7 wherein the back structure includes a structural code.

9. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the base unit includes a depressible switch in a receiving region that receives the indicium containing

structure, and wherein the depressible switch is upwardly biased in the absence of pressure on the indicium containing structure when the indicium containing structure is attached to the base unit.

10. (Currently Amended) A method of using an interactive educational toy apparatus comprising:

(a) attaching a base unit on a vertical surface, wherein the base unit includes

(i) a housing,

(ii) a processor unit in the housing,

(iii) a speaker coupled to the processor unit, and

(iv) a reader coupled to the processor unit; and

(b) attaching the indicium containing structure including an indicium to the base unit so that the indicium containing structure is attached to the base unit and the vertical surface wherein the reader is capable of identifying the indicium containing structure in response to the attaching the indicium containing structure.

11. (Original) The method of claim 10 further comprising pressing the indicium containing structure after (b) to cause the base unit to produce a sound associated with the indicium.

12. (Original) The method of claim 10 wherein the vertical surface is a refrigerator door and wherein the base unit further comprises a magnet.

13. (Original) The method of claim 10 wherein the base unit further comprises a memory unit coupled to the processor unit, wherein the memory unit comprises code for audio associated with the indicium.

14. (Original) The method of claim 10 wherein the base unit further comprises a window, and wherein the window is sized to receive two or more indicium containing structures.

15. (Original) The method of claim 10 wherein the base unit further comprises a window that receives the indicium containing structure.

16. (Original) The method of claim 10 wherein the base unit further comprises a memory unit, wherein the memory unit comprises code for informing a user whether or not the correct or incorrect combination of indicium containing structures is on the base unit.

17. (Currently Amended) An interactive educational toy apparatus comprising:

(a) an indicium containing structure including a three-dimensional indicium and a first magnet; and

(b) a base unit capable of being attached to a vertical surface, wherein the base unit includes

(i) a housing,

(ii) a processor unit in the housing,

(iii) a memory unit coupled to the processor unit, wherein the memory unit comprises code for audio associated with the indicium,

(iv) a speaker coupled to the processor unit,

(v) a reader coupled to the processor unit, and

(vi) a second magnet adapted to attract the vertical surface so that the base unit is attached to the surface;

wherein the reader is capable of identifying the indicium containing structure in response to the indicium containing structure attaching to the base unit by said first magnet.

18. (Original) The interactive educational toy apparatus of claim 17 wherein the indicium is one of a sequence of ordered indicia, and wherein the apparatus further comprises a set of indicium containing structures respectively including the ordered sequence of indicia.

19. (Original) The interactive educational toy of claim 18 wherein the sequence of ordered indicia is the alphabet or an ordered set of numbers.

20. (Original) The interactive educational toy of claim 18 wherein the audio associated with the indicium comprises audio for the name of the indicium and one or more phonetic pronunciations associated with the indicium.

21. (New) An interactive apparatus comprising:

a housing;

a receiving region adapted to receive an indicium containing structure that is attachable therewith using a first attachment element;

a processor unit disposed in the housing;

a reader coupled to the processor unit, said reader for identifying said indicium containing structure;

a speaker coupled to the processor unit, said speaker for rendering audio output related to the indicium containing structure; and

a second attachment element coupled to the housing for attaching said housing to a substantially vertical surface.

22. (New) The apparatus of Claim 21 wherein the first attachment element and the second attachment element are magnets.

23. (New) The apparatus of Claim 21 wherein the indicium is three-dimensional.

24. (New) The apparatus of Claim 23 wherein the indicium is selected from the group comprising: a letter; a number; a symbol; and at least a portion of an animal.

25. (New) The apparatus of Claim 21 further comprising a plurality of indicium containing structures, each indicium containing structure operable to be

attached within said receiving region.

26. (New) The apparatus of Claim 25 wherein said plurality of indicium containing structures represent the alphabet.

27. (New) The apparatus of Claim 21 wherein the receiving region is shaped to accept said indicium containing structure in a single orientation.

28. (New) The apparatus of Claim 21 wherein the indicium containing structure comprises a structural code disposed on a back side thereof for identifying said indicium containing structure.

29. (New) The apparatus of Claim 28 wherein the reader is operable to read said structural code.

30. (New) The apparatus of Claim 21 further comprising a depressible switch disposed in the receiving region and wherein the depressible switch is activated in response to external pressure applied to the indicium containing structure when the indicium containing structure is attached.

31. (New) The apparatus of Claim 30 wherein the processor, in response to activation of the depressible switch, is operable to cause said speaker to render the audio output related to the indicium containing structure.

32. (New) The apparatus of Claim 21 wherein the processor is operable to recognize the indicium containing structure when attached within said receiving region and, in response thereto, the processor is further operable to cause said speaker to render the audio signal associated with the indicium containing structure.

33. (New) The apparatus of Claim 21 wherein the audio signal is instructional information.

34. (New) The apparatus of Claim 26 wherein the audio signal comprises a name of a letter of the alphabet represented by the respective indicium containing structure.

35. (New) The apparatus of Claim 26 wherein the audio signal comprises a phonetic sound of a letter of the alphabet represented by the respective indicium containing structure.

36. (New) The apparatus of Claim 21 wherein the receiving region is sized to receive a plurality of indicium containing structures.

37. (New) An interactive apparatus comprising:

a housing operable to be removably attached to a substantially vertical surface with an attachment;

a processor unit disposed within the housing;

a memory unit coupled to the processor unit and comprising code for identifying a plurality of indicium containing structures and for rendering a plurality of audio informations respectively associated with the plurality of indicium containing structures;

a speaker coupled to the processor unit for rendering the audio informations; and

a reader coupled to the processor unit for reading a code disposed on an indicium containing structure when said indicium containing structure is removably attached to the housing.

38. (New) The apparatus of Claim 37 wherein the plurality of indicium containing structures are a sequence of ordered indicia.

39. (New) The apparatus of Claim 38 wherein the sequence of ordered indicia is alphanumeric.

40. (New) The apparatus of Claim 37 wherein each of said plurality of audio informations is associated with a respective indicium containing structure and comprises an identification of the respective indicium containing structure and one or more phonetic pronunciations associated with the respective indicium containing structure.

41. (New) The apparatus of Claim 37 wherein the processor is operable to recognize a first indicium containing structure when attached to said housing and, in response thereto, the processor is further operable to cause said speaker to render a first audio information associated with the first indicium containing structure.

42. (New) The apparatus of Claim 41 wherein the processor is operable to recognize a second indicium containing structure when attached to said housing and, in response thereto, the processor is further operable to cause said speaker to render a second audio information associated with the second indicium containing structure.

43. (New) The apparatus of Claim 37 wherein said code uniquely identifies the indicium containing structure.

44. (New) The apparatus of Claim 37 wherein said attachment is a magnet and wherein said vertical surface is metallic.

45. (New) The apparatus of Claim 37 wherein said memory comprises a removable cartridge insertable in said housing and wherein said removable cartridge comprises audio informations of said plurality of audio informations.

46. (New) The apparatus of Claim 37 wherein the plurality of audio informations comprises names of letters of the alphabet represented by the plurality

of indicium containing structure.

47. (New) The apparatus of Claim 37 wherein the plurality of audio informations comprises phonetic sounds of letters of the alphabet represented by the plurality of indicium containing structure.

48. (New) A method of interacting with a user, said method comprising:

in response to a first indicium containing structure being removably attached to a receiving region of a housing, reading a first code on said first indicium containing structure;

recognizing said first indicium containing structure in response to said reading said first code;

accessing a memory containing a plurality of audio informations to identify a first audio information associated with said first indicium containing structure; and

causing said first audio information to be rendered using a speaker disposed within said housing, wherein said housing is operable to be removably mounted on a substantially vertical surface.

49. (New) A method as described in Claim 48 wherein said recognizing, said accessing and said causing are performed by a processor disposed within said housing.

50. (New) A method as described in Claim 48 wherein said memory

comprises a plurality of audio informations each associated with a respective indicium containing structure of a plurality of indicium containing structures.

51. (New) A method as described in Claim 50 further comprising:

in response to a second indicium containing structure being removably attached to said receiving region of said housing, reading a second code on said second indicium containing structure;

recognizing said second indicium containing structure in response to said reading said second code;

accessing said memory to identify a second audio information associated with said second indicium containing structure; and

causing said second audio information to be rendered using said speaker.

52. (New) The method of Claim 51 wherein the housing is sized to receive both said first and said second indicium containing structures.

53. (New) The method of Claim 52 further comprising:

determining if said first and said second indicium containing structures are part of an expected set of indicium containing structures; and

causing an audio signal to be rendered representative of a result of said determining.

54. (New) The method of Claim 53 further comprising causing to be

rendered an audio cue describing said expected set of indicium containing structures before said first and second indicium containing structures are attached to said housing.

55. (New) The method of Claim 48 wherein the vertical surface is a surface of a refrigerator door.

56. (New) The method of Claim 48 wherein said causing said first audio information to be rendered comprises:

rendering an audio information identifying said first indicium containing structure; and

rendering a sound that is associated with said first indicium containing structure.

57. (New) The method of Claim 48 further comprising, in response to said first indicium containing structure being depressed by a user while attached to said housing, causing said first audio information to be rendered.

58. (New) The method of Claim 48 further comprising:

causing to be rendered an audio cue describing an expected indicium containing structure before said first indicium containing structure is attached to said housing;

determining if said first indicium containing structure is said expected indicium

containing structure; and

causing an audio signal to be rendered representative of a result of said determining.

59. (New) The method of Claim 48 wherein the plurality of audio informations comprises names of letters of the alphabet represented by the plurality of indicium containing structure.

60. (New) The method of Claim 48 wherein the plurality of audio informations comprises phonetic sounds of letters of the alphabet represented by the plurality of indicium containing structure.

61. (New) An interactive apparatus comprising:

a housing;

a receiving region of said housing and adapted to receive a predetermined number of indicium containing structures that are removably attachable therewith;

a processor unit disposed in the housing;

a speaker coupled to the processor unit;

a memory coupled to said processor unit and comprising a plurality of audio informations wherein a different audio information is associated with a set of unique combinations of indicium containing structures;

a reader coupled to the processor unit and for identifying the indicium containing structures; and

an attachment element coupled to the housing for removably attaching said housing to a substantially vertical surface.

62. (New) An interactive apparatus as described in Claim 61 wherein said reader is operable to read a code associated with an indicium containing structure when attached to said receiving region.

63. (New) An interactive apparatus as described in Claim 62 wherein said processor is operable to identify said indicium containing structure based on said code.

64. (New) An interactive apparatus as described in Claim 61 wherein said processor is operable to identify a first indicium containing structure and a second indicium containing structure when both are attached to said housing and further operable to access said memory to obtain a first audio information associated with a combination of said first and said second indicium containing structures.

65. (New) An interactive apparatus as described in Claim 64 wherein said processor is operable cause said speaker to render said first audio information.

66. (New) An interactive apparatus as described in Claim 65 wherein said processor is operable to identify a third indicium containing structure and a fourth indicium containing structure when both are attached to said housing and further

operable to access said memory to obtain a second audio information associated with a combination of said third and said fourth indicium containing structures.

67. (New) An interactive apparatus as described in Claim 66 wherein said processor is operable cause said speaker to render said second audio information.

68. (New) An interactive apparatus as described in Claim 61 wherein said predetermined number is two.

69. (New) An interactive apparatus of Claim 61 wherein the plurality of audio informations comprises names of letters of the alphabet represented by the plurality of indicium containing structure.

70. (New) An interactive apparatus of Claim 61 wherein the plurality of audio informations comprises phonetic sounds of letters of the alphabet represented by the plurality of indicium containing structure.